

5 A Day International Symposium Proceedings

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5 A Day International Symposium Proceedings

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Foreword

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Over the past few decades, an emerging international consensus has evolved associating diets high in vegetables and fruit with reduced risk of many cancers and other chronic diseases^{1,2}. This emerging consensus, combined with suboptimal fruit and vegetable consumption across populations¹, has led to a call to action for public health professionals to plan programmes to address this issue.

By creating a workable model in which public agencies and private industry work together on a national level to address this significant public health concern, the US 5 A Day for Better Health Program has piqued national as well as international interest. The unique national public–private partnership which lies at the heart of the programme clearly captured the imagination of public health and private industry leaders worldwide.

In 1998, the National Cancer Institute (NCI) and the Produce for Better Health Foundation (PBH) convened the first 5 A Day International Symposium. The timing seemed ideal. The 5 A Day infrastructure, including all 50 states, many federal agencies and key industry participants, was securely in place. The NCI had begun quantifying formally the impact of the US programme. The PBH was expanding and strengthening several aspects of its national programme. Both the NCI and PBH could point to a number of successes and challenges encountered as the programme grew and matured. International interest in the US 5 A Day Program and the application of the 5 A Day model in other countries had increased as well. Several countries had already begun to publish findings from their own 5 A Day-type programmes^{3,4} in which they documented their own successes and lessons learned. The time was right to convene representatives from other countries to share the US experiences to date and to learn from theirs.

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The symposium attracted leading health officials and produce industry representatives from 25 countries spread over six continents. A number of countries represented at the meeting have utilized the US 5 A Day Program as a model for public health nutrition programming and have shared their successes and challenges. Other participants attended the conference so they could apply the lessons learned from existing programmes as they establish nutrition and health promotion programmes at home.

The symposium focused on issues central to programmes at all stages of implementation. It provided a summary of the scientific underpinnings of 5 A Day-type programmes, an overview of the US 5 A Day model, and an examination of several applications of the programme in other countries. Common themes, such as initiating public–private partnerships, leveraging resources for effective communications and measuring changes in fruit and vegetable consumption were addressed. Most importantly for many participants, however, a dialogue within and between countries had begun.

By publishing the proceedings of the conference, we hope to disseminate more widely the efforts undertaken internationally to refine and apply the 5 A Day model. The importance of creative and theory-driven interventions in redressing the global increases in the rates of cancer and other chronic diseases cannot be underrated. We have an extraordinary opportunity to learn from each other and forge future collaborations in research and practice. We believe this meeting, the corresponding proceedings and continued dialogue begin to lay the groundwork for international collaborations.

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Introduction of the US Surgeon General Dr David Satcher

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My name is Bob Hiatt. I'm the Deputy Director for the Division of Cancer Control and Population Sciences for the National Cancer Institute. It is my pleasure to be here this morning and to welcome you to Washington, DC. It looks like we have a beautiful day in a beautiful town to talk about an important subject. I understand you all had an enjoyable time last night at the reception, had a lot of energy for this topic, and the excitement it has generated around the world. We hope to continue that today.

There are over 110 registrants from six continents for this meeting. The concept of 5 A Day and the excitement about it has spread throughout the world, and we hope today to describe in more detail the activities that support this endeavour. One of the things that is very exciting for us, in this country, is the movement of research findings into public health practice. The US government through the National Institutes of Health and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention strongly supports the research base for the 5 A Day for Better Health Program and other public health interventions and works to move this research into real public health application.

If we're really going to reduce the cancer burden in this country, our efforts have to go beyond the research findings and have an impact through public health application. This can only be done through partnerships with voluntary agencies, with industry, government and public health workers throughout the country. 5 A Day is an excellent example of how this can be done.

We'd like to thank the people who helped us put on this conference. In particular, I want to mention a couple of names from the National Cancer Institute and the Produce for Better Health Foundation. Gloria Stables from the National Cancer

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Institute; Margaret Farrell, Linda Nebeling and Daria Chapelsky all helped from the NCI. From the Produce for Better Health Foundation, Elizabeth Pivonka, Claudia Wenzling and Robb Enright have all worked very hard to put this symposium together, and I think they all deserve a round of applause.

I'd also like to thank the symposium's sponsors. Last night, Porter Novelli was responsible for putting on the reception, which you all enjoyed. We'd also like to thank the Dole Food Company, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the Produce Marketing Association, the Seminis Vegetable Seeds Company and the Maryland Food Center Authority. Again, thank you for your help in supporting this conference.

It's now my pleasure to introduce Dr David Satcher, your first and keynote speaker for today. Dr Satcher has just this year been named the 16th Surgeon General of the United States. It's a very great honour to introduce him, because he's had a very distinguished career. In the 5 years prior to being named Surgeon General, he was the director of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention in Atlanta. This federal agency is responsible for promoting health and preventing disease, injury and premature death. It works very closely with the state and local governments to carry out public health activities and is a much admired and respected organization. Dr Satcher has done much to further the work of the CDC, and to continue its good reputation and contribution to our health in this country.

In several areas, there have been outstanding contributions under Dr Satcher's leadership: in immunizations, in the area of emerging infectious diseases, new infectious diseases, and in early warning systems for food-borne illnesses. But his contributions go beyond infectious disease. He has been responsible for spearheading the enhancement of chronic disease and prevention programmes, especially in breast and cervical cancer screening. Prior to his leading the CDC, he was President of Meharry Medical College for 11 years, and has had a career distinguished by multiple honours including appointments to the Institute of Medicine of the National Academy of Sciences. He's truly a 'Renaissance man': a scholar, a physician and a public health advocate of the first order. In this country, when the Surgeon General speaks, people listen. I invite you to listen to Dr David Satcher on his views of global application of the 5 A Day Program. Thank you.